The Living Way

BYRON PALMER

AUTHOR OF GOD'S WHITE THRONE

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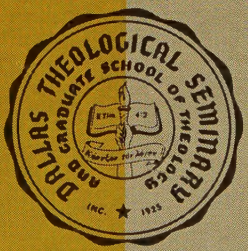

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Byron Palmer

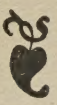
THE LIVING WAY.

By

REV. BYRON PALMER, A. M., D. D.

Author of "God's White Throne"

"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me"—JESUS.—ST. JOHN XIV, 6.



CINCINNATI:
PRESS OF JENNINGS AND GRAHAM

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Dedication.

To Dr. Borden P. Bowne,
My Teacher, Brother, Friend,

I Dedicate This Book
In Love and Gratitude.

The Author.

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PREFACE.

My happiness in being able to publish "The Living Way" is abounding; and in writing these few lines of salutation I feel that I have little else to say than to tell of the tide of gratitude which fills my heart. I wish to thank my many delightful and kind friends who by their subscription in advance for "The Living Way" have enabled me to publish it without anxiety. I notice that nearly all those who have thus interested themselves in my new venture are readers of my former publication, "God's White Throne." There seems to be almost a conspiracy of love in their words of appreciation of "God's White Throne" and their words of greeting and good-will for its author. Their effort to

assure me that I am serving a wider and better field for God and men by what I have written than I could possibly have done had I retained my health and filled my ministry in the usual way causes my heart to overflow with gladness and gratitude. I thank them for these words of comfort and wish to assure them of my hearty appreciation for such compensation.

Once more God has given me a message by which I may have a ministry for Christ among men. I am glad my health has been spared sufficiently to publish this volume and offer it to the public. And what shall I say of my gratitude for her, the heroine of my home and heart, whose health has overflowed and whose kindness has been unfailing through the continued months and years of my helpless invalid life! "She hath done what she could."

It may be observed by a few readers of "The Living Way" that this is not the first

time its chapters have seen the light. They first appeared in booklet form. It was the gracious reception which they received from competent critics of my own and other Churches that led me to publish them in permanent form.

May God speed "The Living Way;" companion to "God's White Throne!"

Cordially,

Byron Palmer.

Ashtabula, Ohio, January, 1903.

THE MIRACLE, CHRIST.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
Hark! all the tribes Hosanna cry;
O Savior meek, pursue thy road
With palms and scattered garments strowed.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
In lowly pomp ride on to die:
O Christ, thy triumphs now begin
O'er captive death and conquered sin.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
The winged squadrons of the sky
Look down with sad and wondering eyes
To see the approaching sacrifice.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
Thy last and fiercest strife is nigh;
The Father, on his sapphire throne,
Expects his own anointed Son.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
In lowly pomp ride on to die;
Bow thy meek head to mortal pain,
Then take, O God, thy power, and reign.

—*Henry H. Milman.*

CHAPTER I.

THE MIRACLE, CHRIST.

Foremost in the thought of this age is the effort to comprehend the teachings and account for the character of the Christ. Never among men was there another such remarkable person, never was there such searching light turned upon Him as now, and never as under such light was the miraculous nature of Christ made so manifest. Greater than miracles of healing, more astonishing than feeding the multitudes, more unaccountable than raising the dead, more amazing even than rising from the grave is the Christ who wrought all these and many more such marvelous works. Greater than all the miracles of the prophets and of the apostles and of

Christ Himself, and more essential to the world's present needs and future progress, and to the soul's righteousness and redemption is the miracle of miracles—*Christ.* It is not the object of this paper to eulogize Christ. That would be as useless as it is impossible. It would be like gilding refined gold or painting a lily to make it whiter. No more need be done than trace through the Gospels the lines of His peerless character. This done, the Miracle shines forth in His own light.

His Sustained Biography.

From Bethlehem to Bethany, how short the journey! From the annunciation to the ascension, what a parenthesis! Thirty and three years, but eternity is crowded into them. The life of the Lord began with a miracle, moved upon the plain of the celestial and ended with the clouds receiving Him out of sight. His biography, as

recorded in the Gospels, is self-sustained and self-consistent from beginning to end. Miraculously conceived, His birth is announced by angels and sung by the heavenly host in praise to God, and proclaimed as peace to earth and good-will to all men. He is adored by shepherds and worshiped by sages, guided and guarded by angels. In His childhood He grew in wisdom and was in favor with God and man. He astonished the wise with His spiritual insight and clearly apprehended His life's holy mission. His manhood was but the expansion of the precocity and innocence of His youth. He wrought numberless miracles as easily as though they were to Him only commonplace tasks, and He taught with the same ease and grace with which He wrought and with the same astonishment to the world. He was in constant and often audible communication with God, and His followers were witnesses of the voice of

the Divine. He early saw the storm of wrath that was gathering about His sacred head, but He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem where the conspiracies were formed and the plots laid to put Him to death. He prayed and angels were seen to minister unto Him. The mob howled and cursed and demanded His death, but He looked upon them with the silence and majesty of the stars. He suffered the mockery of injustice from cowardly churchmen and craven politicians, but He uttered not a word in self-defense. He was nailed to the cross and died, but the sun was darkened, the world was draped in mourning and the earth quaked as though all nature were shocked at the awful tragedy. He was laid in the tomb, but He arose and the angels of God announced His resurrection as they had His immaculate conception. He greeted His disciples with salutations of hope, and then ascended

to heaven whence He said He had come, and to His Father whose will He declared to be His mission to the world. What a biography! It began above the ordinary, above the human, in the sphere of the Divine and His subsequent life, resurrection, and ascension perfectly correspond with His miraculous birth. Nowhere is there a descent from the lofty plain on which He moved. Nowhere can we detect a strained effort on the part of Christ to sustain Himself, and not once do we see in His biography an attempt to do more than give a plain narrative of a life that had been lived and of a Person who had been to the writers an associate and friend. The entire record is characterized by candor and fidelity to fact. What now shall we say of the subject of these Gospel biographies? Myth, man, or miracle? Unhesitatingly we believe and reply that the Christ of the Gospels was a living personal

miracle, and can be accounted for in no other way.

His Personality Universal.

Jesus was the Son of Man. He belonged to the race and was a citizen of the centuries. He defies classification with even the greatest of men and can not be accounted for by the age in which He lived. He was a world citizen, a universal type.

He was of humble birth, led a wandering childhood and a life of obscurity through His youth and young manhood. After He was two years of age He never traveled beyond the very narrow limits of Judea, Samaria, Perea, and Galilee. He had no knowledge of geography or of general history or of the great nations of the earth, either from travel or teachers or books. He was of Jewish nationality, brought up in a city that was notorious for its prof-

ligacy, in the midst of a cramped, decayed civilization, bitter jealousies, social caste, and race prejudices. He was poor, a toiler of the toilers, without the honor of his community or the confidence of His own brothers and sisters. He had just one advantage, one blessed influence, one person that loved Him, believed in Him and taught Him, and that was a Mother. All else was obstruction athwart His pathway. But notwithstanding all this and in spite of it, He was circumscribed by no national or natural limitations. He outgrew the land of His birth, all local prejudices, race characteristics, social deadlines, and decayed systems of His age. His sympathies and His help went out to all classes irrespective of race or condition. His grasp of fundamental truths and universal principles was firm and clear. He had such an intuitive knowledge of men that He could with perfect confidence lay down principles of per-

sonal life, social relations, and national duties, that were practicable and fundamental for all ages and all people. From His lowly birth and discouraging surroundings Christ arose to the majesty of a world reformer, teacher, statesman, citizen, and man. He was an entire humanity in Himself. He was human rather than masculine or feminine, old or young, rich or poor, Jew or Gentile, bond or free. He was first and foremost a man. A man possessing all human excellencies combined in the perfect balance of a lofty universal character. In Him all people in all ages can see the perfect type to which every man should be conformed.

There have been great men who arose above the rest of mankind like mountain peaks above the plain. But Christ arose infinitely above them all. He was to other great men of earth what the sun is to the solar system. He is the center, they the

satellites. Their light can be accounted for, but His can not. His like never appeared before His time, He had no contemporary who approached Him in any sense, and the ages since have produced none who bear comparison with Him. Here, then, is a man who stands alone, unclassified among men; a break in the historical movement of the human series. Naturalism can account for a great man only by heredity, environment, education, and influence. He is a product of causes that are known, the fruitage of a series that preceded Him. In nature development is forward and the perfect is the product and the last of the series. But Christ was the one exception to this law in all history. He was the perfect preceding the series and the prophecy of what shall be at the end when the race has reached its appointed goal. He is the ideal, the type for the human family. He is a break in the

chain of natural causes. He rises above His age, His race, His conditions, and assumes the unique type of a universal character, the worthy title of the Son of Man.

His Balanced Character.

Unbalanced character is due to moral imperfections. When all the elements of a character are perfect, the character as a whole is perfect and the poise exact. But we search in vain among men for character of this sort. The best of men in all ages have known their weaknesses and confessed their faults. But Christ is the single exception to this rule. We find in Him no flaw and He confessed no fault. He professed to do always those things that were pleasing to His heavenly Father. He charged others with sin, but challenged them to convince Him of sin. He commanded others to repent and grieved for their sins, but never for His own. He

prayed, but never for pardon, for He never experienced remorse or condemnation. The prayer that He taught others He never offered in His own behalf. He never acknowledged a mistake or compromised on a moral question. He was never taken by surprise even by the most crafty, and no question, however puzzling, ever caused Him the least embarrassment. He was never elated over any of His achievements, either of truths taught or of deeds done. His resources never seemed exhausted or His spirit disturbed or His courage broken. So great was His popularity at one time that had He seized the opportunity He might have been a national leader and liberator; but true to His convictions that His kingdom was not of this world He chose rather the path that led through ignominy to the cross. His denunciation of counterfeit piety, His judgment upon hypocrisy, and His indignation at turning the

house of prayer into a den of thieves were most consuming, but they sprung from a heart that was jealous for sincerity and righteousness, and their effect has been wholesome in the Christian Church unto the present day. They were like the storms and cyclones and thunderbolts in nature which, though often destructive of life and property, are subject to God's laws and are therefore ministrations of good to the world. His frequent reference to Himself as the Judge and Light of the world, as the fulfillment of prophecy, and the Prophet of ages to come, as the Way, the Truth, the Life and the burden-bearer of all men, and as the object of worship, the rightful ruler of the heart and the arbiter on questions of right and wrong, would, if made by any one else, be considered audacity and vanity intolerable. But so perfectly does the character of Jesus sustain His claims that no one ever thinks of accusing Him of ex-

travagance or inconsistency. He wept over the sins of a great city and declared that His presence in the world meant a world-crisis and the end of the age. But for all that, who has ever thought to charge Him with insanity or eccentricity. More amazing still, Christ claimed to have lived before Abraham and to have been greater than the greatest of His race. He claimed to forgive sins and to give eternal, imperishable life to His followers and to have shared in common with the Father the glory of His habitation before the world was. The perfect balance and beautiful symmetry of Christ's incomparable character explains the absence of elements that are common to all men, and in a true portrait of Him they could not appear because He did not possess them.

Christ was a man truly, but He was something more. He was a human miracle. Certainly no less than this can be

said of Him, and more would have to be said to account for Him with truth and intelligence.

Master of the Masters.

Christ was the master teacher of the world. Other masters have had the advantage of schools, and books, and teachers, and travel, and associates and cultured society, and years in which to perfect their systems and publish their philosophies, and disciples to interpret and teach their ideas. But Christ had not one of these advantages. Other masters have been statesmen with political influence or priests with ecclesiastical authority, or doctors with a reputation for learning, or reformers with a following that recognized their leadership. But Christ was a carpenter living in a disreputable town, having as His lot the support of a widowed mother and a family of younger brothers

and sisters. And yet the people were astonished at His doctrine and the authority with which He taught. They wondered that one who never had learned should know such wisdom. They listened with rapture to the gracious words that proceeded from His mouth and declared that never man spake like this Man. In His teachings Christ dealt with the essential and the real. Never did He utter a meaningless sentence or an ambiguous expression. Never was He sensational or self-contradictory or obscure. He was always great, majestic, solemn, and sincere. He always taught the same lessons whether addressing the poorest, the weakest, and the worst, or doctors, lawyers, and senators. He was as faithful to a simple lost soul as He was to the multitude. He taught always as though His hearers were souls with destinies divine and everlasting. He dealt with the realities of God and His

fatherly love and providence for all His creatures; the sinfulness and savableness of men; the meaning of redemption and the way of salvation; man's divine human nature and of his relations to both the human and the divine; man's authority in nature and his duties to society, to the state, and to posterity; the destructiveness of sin and the happiness and benefits of righteousness; man's responsibility and accountability, his wants and immortality and of his high calling as a child of God. Ever and on all occasions He emphasized what was essential from God's point of view, and what He said was the test of truth for all that the world knew and believed. He taught as though He had in His pure nature a direct and unclouded vision of all fundamental realities and relations and His teaching set souls on fire with conviction and hope. He was to His age a conscience and a judgment. His forceful

and truthful utterances awoke the soul and aroused all that it possessed of good or evil. He understood and revealed human nature so clearly that men knew themselves as never before and felt condemned or justified according to character by the monitor within. What other master ever had the range of knowledge, the depth of wisdom, and the grasp of essentials that Christ possessed? What one with all the advantages ever awoke his age and the world as Christ did with no advantages at all? One has taught this truth, another that, and another a third, but none can bear comparison with Christ in his mastery of all truth and its full-orbed revelation to the world. "Never man spake as this man."

The Founder of a World-Order.

The Roman empire in the time of Christ extended from the upper Nile to the high-

lands of Scotland and from the Atlantic to the Indus. It was synonymous with the world. Palestine was a province, and the Jews were subjects of the imperial power. The Emperor's army was scattered throughout the world to suppress insurrections and enforce his imperial decrees. Luxury, immorality, and idolatry were characteristics of the age. Race prejudice was bitter and no race was despised more than the Jewish, and none retaliated more bitterly than they. They looked for a deliverer and at first they thought that in the person of Christ their Messiah had come. But He proved an utter disappointment to them. His kingdom was not to be of this world, but a kingdom of heaven, an empire of souls. His was to be a conquest of minds and hearts of men. Truth was to be His weapon and teaching His tactics. He wrote not a word. He kept within the bounds of His own native land.

His public life was limited to three years. He antagonized the religious hierarchy of His time. He was misunderstood even by His few faithful disciples. He organized no society and originated no plans. He founded no party and formulated no laws. Catholic in spirit, He sought to enlarge the intellectual and moral horizon of His age to the full compass of His own sympathies and insight. He prophesied the downfall of existing political and religious systems and the coming in of a new world-order, of which He should be the center of civil, moral, and intellectual gravitation, and the exhaustless source of truth and righteousness for all time. He simply set in motion moral forces which should be leaven in society, silently working in the world until the whole of humanity should be rejuvenescent with life divine. Such was the purpose and such the prophecy of Christ, and He was confident that His cause would tri-

umph. But from all human calculation nothing seemed more visionary and hopeless than such a project. He was crucified as a criminal at thirty-three, utterly abandoned by all save His Mother and a few influential followers. But there is a resurrection unto life of everything that is of worth to the world and in sympathy with God. Nothing dies that is Divine. Christ knew He would rise again. But where in all history do we find another such conception as this of founding a new and everlasting world-order in the affections of men! This Christ proposed and achieved, and He is the most loved and best known person that has appeared in the world.

But how shall we account for such a conception and such confidence of its realization from one who had only disadvantages and discouragements facing Him to defeat the fulfillment of His purpose and His prophecy? If we admit that Christ

was a miracle we have an explanation. If we do not, we still have the miracle to explain, though we have denied the Christ.

His Historic Supremacy.

Christ is the central and supreme figure in history. So conspicuous is He that He commands universal recognition and reverence. No historian dares omit His name, or ignore the world forces that He put in motion. Above every name is the name of Christ. And as for Christianity, England with her thousand years of literature and laws, her commerce and conquests and civilization, is a fact of far less historical significance. No philosophy is in stable equilibrium that does not recognize Christ's doctrine of the unity and personality and perfection of God, and His presence and providence in the world, and man's mental and moral nature as taught by the great Master. Statesmanship has been broad,

liberal, and just to the degree that it has enacted into national institutions and policies the principles of the moral law as taught by Christ. Through all the Christian centuries and the ages of prophecy preceding them, His name has been the theme of story and song. His face and figure have been the subject of the painter's pencil and the sculptor's chisel. As society has conformed to the relations of man to man as Jesus taught them, it has been more humane, more prosperous, and more fraternal. In Christ the desire of the nations has come. In Him the prophecies and types of ages that have felt in the darkness after God are realized. He is the interpretation of the centuries past and the forerunner of ages to come. He is the philosophy of all history, because He is the acknowledged moral and intellectual force that is evolving a world wherein dwelleth righteousness.

THE ALTERNATIVE.

The writer does not claim to have given in this paper a perfect portrait of the historic Christ. But one thing is certain, the portrait is not overdrawn. No one who has read the Gospel narratives can fail to see that the character there presented is indescribable. But we are brought face to face with an unavoidable alternative. It is this: Are the records true and the character a personal miracle, or are the records a forgery and Christ an impostor?

That the records are of a very early date, and that they give an account of the life and teachings and works of Christ, no one will deny. That the Gospels have stood the test of the most severe literary criticism for a thousand years is also undeniable. Now, if no such person as a perfect Christ ever lived how was such a portrait ever produced? There must have been such a person, since we have the picture. For

unlearned men, or even men of a philosophic imagination to forge such a character as Christ would be even more of a miracle than a living Christ, and the miracle would be made doubly miraculous by the fact that the best and brainiest men of the most enlightened ages and nations have been duped into the belief that this forged Christ was a real Christ, and having believed in Him have felt His saving power.

There is but one way to account for Christ, and that is that He is a different order of being from other men. The lowest ground that can be taken concerning Him is that He was a miracle of miracles. But we shall take higher ground than even this if we believe Him to have been truthful and rational in His claims of unity and eternity with the Father, and accept the Father's testimony concerning Him as His well beloved Son. He was not a myth or

a legend. He was more than a mere man or a prophet. He was essentially Divine, therefore both capable and desirous of becoming human that He might lead back the prodigal children of God to their Father's house. "Truly this man was the Son of God."

THE ATONING CHRIST.

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Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted Him, and gave unto Him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians ii, 5-11.

CHAPTER II.

THE ATONING CHRIST.

The coming of Christ into the world was not for the purpose of changing God's attitude toward men, but men's attitude toward God. The creation of man had its inception in the infinite goodness of God, and the race has never been without the enjoyment of the unlimited blessings of Divine compassion. It is impossible to think that God, whose knowledge of His creation and love for all His creatures are perfect and eternal, should be taken by surprise by man's rebellion against righteousness or by unforeseen facts concerning His attitude toward Him, and from such knowledge allow His love for man to be turned to anger. That God is a being

subject to moods and passions is unthinkable.

The coming of Christ did not increase God's love for men. It has made them more lovable to the degree that it has wrought into their moral natures the Divine likeness, but God did not love men less before Christ came. The infinite heart loves all mankind, not so much because they are holy and just, as because they are capable of such Divine excellencies; and it was to save them, that is, to change their moral relation toward God and perfect in them the Divine image, that Christ came into the world. God does not therefore love the world because Christ came to save it, but Christ came to save the world because God loved it, and so loved it as to give His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life. It is not God, then, who is reconciled to men by the coming of

Christ, but men who are reconciled to God. He was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, and we love Him because He first loved us.

The coming of Christ and the ministry of reconciliation which He gave to the world was for the purpose of bringing the world to God and uniting man to Him in loving obedience and holy likeness. It was to put men *at one* with God and be to the world *the atoning Christ.*

God and Man Revealed.

Our Lord not only gave to the world a revelation, but He was a revelation. In Himself He perfectly revealed to the world both God and man. He was the Son of God and the Son of Man. It is in Christ that we get our first true knowledge of the nature of God and His feeling toward the children of men; and yet we are able to see in Him only a suggestion of the in-

finities of the Divine being. In Him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead, but our limited understanding bars us from a full knowledge of God even when revealed in His Son. We behold in Him wisdom and power and goodness and love and truth, and trace these lines as far as we are able out of the human into the border of the Divine that is revealed in Him, and as far as we can follow them we find that they are parallel and prove to us that they converge in and emanate from nothing short of the infinite. But what we learn of God even when thus revealed in His Son is only the beginning, only a fragment of the infinite that lies beyond our understanding.

But, though our knowledge of God in Christ is only partial, we should not even have this knowledge were it not for the Incarnation. Had it not been for the coming of Christ and the revelation to the world of God in Him, the nature and char-

acter of God would have forever remained unknowable and obscure to us. Men might have continued speculating and philosophising about the Divine Being, but to the world He still would have remained the "Unknown God." The heavens might declare His glory and the firmament show His handiwork, but men would have continued mistaking the creature for the Creator and worshiping the forces of nature and human conceptions of the Divine in the forms of images and myths and men.

But as revealed in Christ, God is seen to be more than the Creator and Sovereign of the world. Added to these conceptions of Him is that of a Father, as He said, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Thus is the true idea of God taken out of the field of speculative thought and brought forth into the borderland of human understanding. He is no longer a being dreadful to contemplate, but one to

be loved and adored as a Father. Thus, beginning with what we know of human fatherhood, and eliminating from that conception all human faults and weaknesses and combining in it our highest ideals of the good, the just, the kind, the true, and the self-sacrificing, we are able to rise from the human to the Divine and embrace in our thought and affection the Father whom Christ reveals.

But our Lord is also a revelation of man to the world, because in His work of human redemption this is no less important to us than a revelation of God.

As man is made in the image of God, the Divine implies the human. God would not be God if He could not humanize Himself. The humanity of Christ is the humanity of God made manifest to the world. In Christ, God became human that He might teach men their rightful place in the kingdom of heaven and restore in them

that type of perfect humanity which is revealed in Christ. Only in Christ do we see the true, the ideal man, and it is only as we are like Him that we approach completeness.

In Christ we see what we are and what we are not. In Him we see that we are loved and sought after by our Heavenly Father. We see that we are akin to God because we see that One who is human like ourselves has come forth from God to greet us and to own us as kinsmen, even as brothers. And yet we see that, unlike that Divine humanity, we are sinful and out of harmony with the kingdom of God. As children we are prodigals from our Father's house. The moral contrast between our humanity and the humanity of God in Christ is truly great, and yet that Divine humanity is brought within the circle of our frail and imperfect selves and by it we are led to abhor what is evil and

morally weak in us and feel the inspiration and the attraction of the life in Christ that is in tune and at one with God.

The Sufferings of the Savior.

The death of Christ on the cross has ever been emphasized by the Christian Church as the chief factor, if not the only factor, in His atoning work, and not a shadow of the deep significance of that awful tragedy for human redemption should be questioned or lightly esteemed by any one. Let the Church through coming ages continue to look, as it has in the past, to the cross and proclaim to the world Christ and Him crucified. Let Christians continue their pilgrimages by faith to Calvary's sacred brow, and there with penitence of heart behold with tearful eyes their suffering Savior. For at the foot of the cross and in the presence of its dying Love the world's hope was born.

It is there that the noblest lives have been quickened and the sweetest comforts have come to human hearts. There is profound significance, meaning deeper than sinful men ever shall be able to fathom in the death of our Lord on the cross. Agony that was so great as to wring from the heart of the Redeemer the bitter cry, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" can not be dismissed from our minds thoughtlessly without doing violence to every sense of reverence and gratitude for wounded dying love, even if it should be regarded as the suffering of none other than a martyr for truth and righteousness. Let the deepest significance be attached to the crucifixion as the last scene in the blameless life of the Son of God who voluntarily gave Himself to die this most cruel death for our salvation. Let nothing be said that will detract from the meaning and power of the cross, but let us not

fail to recognize and duly emphasize other sufferings of the blessed Christ as factors of His atoning merit.

The sufferings of Christ on account of the sins of men were not all endured in His last agony on the cross. We know not the mystery and sacredness of the bond that united the only begotten Son of God with the Father before His Incarnation, nor do we know to what degree it was severed when He left the glory which He had with the Father before the world was and took upon Himself the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men. But everywhere through the Scriptures, and especially the New Testament, God is represented as having an ethical nature, and if we regard Him as a perfect Being we must include this conception in our idea of Him. It certainly does not compromise the character of God to say that He is a being of love and deep feeling. It is by

the human that we are able to interpret the Divine; and when we think of the bond of love that united the Father and the Son, we must think that there was suffering when the only Begotten of the Father humbled Himself and entered into the lot and life of men. His humiliation must have been painful, though it is not revealed to us in what sense His departure from the Father was a separation from Him. But suffering there must have been in the heart of both the Father and the Son, and this suffering is brought down to our realization in the entire life and ministry of the Man of Sorrows.

There must have been suffering in the Divine Father's heart, also, on account of the pitiable plight of His prodigal children. He loved them and it pained Him to see them suffering in their sins and self-destruction; and this Divine grief is also made manifest to us in the suffering Christ

through all the years of His life in the flesh. The burden of doing His Father's will weighed upon Him from the time in His childhood when He said He must be about His Father's business, to the last moment of His life, when, on the cross, He cried, "It is finished!"

There is a significant silence in the years from the time Jesus appeared in the temple to His entrance upon His public ministry. It can not be that through all these years He lived the life of the average youth of Nazareth. Judging from His early apprehension of His mission and the perfect preparation and solemnity with which He took up His sacred work, He must have felt through all these silent years the burden of the world's sins which weighed upon His heart in all His after life. He must have been saddened by the profligacy of His own city. He must have been grieved because His own brethren did

not believe on Him. Through all those years of obscurity how isolated and lonely and burdened His soul must have been! When He came unto His own and His own received Him not, how disappointed He must have felt! Because of His pre-eminent superiority, the vastness of His views, the greatness of His purpose, His deep spiritual insight, His just judgments, His pure character, and His high standard of righteousness, He was ever misunderstood, misjudged, suspected, and despised. He was pursued as a criminal and an outlaw, and that by the religious teachers of His time. His sincere soul suffered at seeing piety turned into a pretense and the house of God into a den of thieves. His delicate, pure spirit was ever chilled by the moral wretchedness of the crowds that continually thronged Him. His love for men was wounded by the hatred that everywhere existed between man and man,

a hatred from which not even He Himself was spared. His compassion for the poor and the weak was pained by the way they were oppressed by the rich and the strong. His reverence for the holy and the just was wronged by the desecration of them in every place where they should have been held in honor. He was crushed for want of sympathy and appreciation of His saving truth and sacred ministry. He was grieved at the hardness of men's hearts, their slowness to believe, their dullness of understanding, their selfish ambitions, and their morbid, sensual curiosity. Truly He trod the wine-press alone and of the people there were none with Him.

We do not discuss the possibility of our Lord falling into sin when He was tempted. We know that He was tempted in all respects as men are, and yet without sin; and that, having suffered, being tempted, He is able to help those who are tempted.

The fact that we here consider is that in His temptations He suffered. Nor could there have been any significance in His temptations without the suffering. And here, too, we are unable to have any true appreciation of the degree of suffering which our Savior endured in these lifelong moral conflicts against evil. The purer a soul is, the greater is its suffering in the presence of that which it most abhors. But no man compares with the Son of God in purity and moral elevation, and hence no man can understand the painful conflict which He underwent in beholding, resisting, and vanquishing the approach of evil.

The death of our Lord was the culmination of His sufferings. Through all His life there was poverty, deprivation, toil, weariness, mental anguish, and soul depression. As He approached the end and foresaw His final suffering, deeper and still deeper became His heart's agony.

Around Him was gathering the storm of opposition and the conspiracy to put Him to death. The people who once heard Him gladly were turned against Him and were demanding His crucifixion without knowing why. Wickedness sat in the seat of religious authority, and injustice and cowardice on the throne of civil power. As the last awful conflict with all the powers of darkness drew near, He saw the multitude of His followers turning against Him. Of His disciples, Thomas doubted Him, Peter denied Him, Judas betrayed Him, all forsook Him. He saw the scourging, the crown of thorns, the mock trial, the maltreatment, the cross. The strain was too great. The agony was too intense. He prays that the cup might pass from Him and He be saved from that awful hour. But no; wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquity He bears His own cross to the place of execution until

His strength gives way and He falls beneath the weight of His heavy burden. Of the crucifixion who can picture its cruelty or realize how intense was the suffering and how dark the loneliness which the Crucified felt as He feared that, in this the hour of His greatest need, even His Father had forsaken Him? Such were the sufferings of Him who died, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.

The Appeal of Christ.

The lifelong sufferings of the Divine-human Christ are a revelation to us of our Father's love for us and His displeasure toward our sins. If God did not love us He would not care what we did. He would be indifferent toward our sins. His heart would not be pained to see us lost and ruined. It was to show us God's grief at our sins and to love us out of them into His own purity that the Son of God

was made flesh. In the heart of the Father the Lamb of God was slain from the foundation of the world and He came into the world to reveal to men in terms of human suffering just what was in the heart of the Father. We thus see how He loves us and how earnestly He seeks us to save us from sin and its fatal consequences, and we see how horrible a thing sin is, since its presence in us causes so much pain in the heart of God and constrains Him to make so great a sacrifice to save us from it.

Christ stands, therefore, between us and the Father as our Mediator and Advocate. He is the servant of both God and men. He serves God in representing to men His Fatherly goodness and His displeasure toward their sins, and serves men by turning their thoughts to God and working in them both to will and to do of His good pleasure. Christ is God's appeal to men

to return from their wanderings to their Father's house, and no stronger appeal could be made.

Men are savable because there is something in them that can be reached and inspired by the condescension and grace of God as seen in Christ. In the moral world the greatest force is that of love. To this the human heart is responsive when it is obdurate to all other influences. It is to the highest and best in human nature that Christ appeals, and when men behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, it is then that all the good that is in them and all that is capable of being made better is quickened. Sorrow on account of sin, the hope of deliverance, the desire to do right, confidence in God, trust in His mercies, confession of faults and sins to God and men, contrition of heart, self-humiliation and consecration, love for men, even for one's ene-

mies, obedience to the will of God, hunger and thirst after righteousness, returning good for evil, and the desire to know the truth that makes one free, these and all other holy aspirations and purposes are awakened in the soul as one comes to know Christ and thinks of the sorrows and the sufferings of His holy life and sacred death. He can not be reverently thought of, much less held before one's mind and heart, without causing a feeling of condemnation in the soul and a desire to have fellowship with Him in His sufferings for sin. So irresistible is the charm of the Crucified that when we get one clear view of Him through penitential tears we want to become His followers and be partakers of His sufferings. His sacrifice condemns us and demands the sacrifice of ourselves to Him who merits our love and life. We connect our sin with His life and death

sufferings, and with Him we are crucified and raised to newness of life.

At One With God.

Our Lord said that He and the Father were one. This is one of those mystical utterances the meaning of which was clearly understood by Him, but which we understand only as it is shaded down into our life and experience. Only by the highest that is in us are we able to reach up and touch with our understanding and appreciation the plainest and most human experiences of Christ in His relation with the Father. He was one with the Father in His will and purpose and life and sufferings and world-redeeming love. In none of these respects are we at one with God. But it was for the purpose of thus relating us with the Father that Christ gives us His ministry of reconciliation. Our sins

have estranged us from God; they have blighted the Divine life in the soul; they have caused dissension in our relations one with another; they have created discord in ourselves; they have caused us to be discontented with duty and they have made us rebellious in suffering. Our Lord has suffered to save us from the love of sin, to give us a desire to do right, and unite us with God the Father. He says, "He that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father and We will come to him and make Our abode with him." What all this means we may not know now; but again He tells us that at that day we shall know that He is in the Father and we in Him and He in us. We are to be united and made one with Christ as the branch is one with the vine, and in our union with Him we are united with the Father who is one with His Son. In Christ we see the Father's forgiving attitude toward us. We

forsake our sins and accept Christ as our Savior and His sufferings as endured for us on account of our sins, and the Father receives us and forgives and forgets our sins for the sake of His Son, our Savior. Like Christ, our wills and purposes and affections and powers come into harmonious union with the Father. Glorious truth!

It is the Divine Father who has suffered because His children were estranged from Him and weary wanderers, suffering in the wilderness of sin and moral ignorance. It is He who has come forth revealing to the world in Christ His grace and forgiving heart and appealing to men by the character and suffering of His Son to forsake their moral wretchedness and return to the purity and peace and plenty that awaits them in their Father's house at their home-coming. It is the prodigal children of God who, seeing in Christ a revelation of the Father, a revelation of

their rightful heritage and the suffering which their sins have caused, have come to themselves, and, casting aside the sins that have separated them from the Father, and returning to His house and His forgiving love, have been by Him received and restored to the joy and peace of union with God.

Such is the atoning work which Christ has accomplished. Such is the atonement which He has made for sin; rather, let it be said, such is the atonement that He was and still is through the ministration of the Spirit, who makes perpetual in the hearts of men all the saving merits of the world's Redeemer.

DIVINE LIFE.

In youth I looked to these very skies,
And probing their immensities,
  I found God there, His visible power;
Yet felt in my heart, amid all its sense
Of the power, an equal evidence
  That His love, there too, was the nobler dower.
For the loving worm within its clod
Were diviner than a loveless god
  Amid his worlds, I will dare to say.
You know what I mean: God 's all, man 's naught:
But also, God, whose pleasure brought
  Man into being, stands away
As it were a handbreadth off, to give
Room for the newly-made to live,
And look at Him from a place apart,
And use his gifts of brain and heart,
Given, indeed, but to keep forever.

—*Robert Browning.*

CHAPTER III.

DIVINE LIFE.

How MYSTERIOUS and how marvelous a thing is life! It is around us, above us, beneath us, within us; we see its varied forms and blended beauties; we hear its songs and its symphonies; we are thrilled by its power as it throbs within us and permeates us body and soul. Its manifestations are perceptible to all the senses and the mind realizes how vast must be the secret force that keeps the world forever so young and so beautiful. And yet, so elusive is life that neither sense perception nor scientific search has ever revealed its nature or discovered its source. We see the electric spark, we feel the shock and observe the velocity and the motive power

of electricity, but from these we learn nothing of its nature. The man of science discovers its laws and contrives to control it for practical uses and that is all. But of the nature of electricity he can tell us nothing; and of life he can tell us no more. As an investigator and observer of the manifestations of life, he sees beauties and traces the lines of nature's laws where they escape the notice of the ordinary man, but as to the real nature of life, one is as wise as the other.

Philosophy is more satisfactory. In its search for a sufficient cause to account for the origin and continuance of the world, it is compelled to assume an infinite power as the beginning and the maintenance of all things; a power that includes in its nature and activities moral, intellectual, as well as natural forces. That is, in order to be rational, it must assume a personal

God as the creator of the world and conclude that life is in its nature divine.

Revelation is still more definite. It tells us that in the beginning was God, the self-existing, ever living Jehovah, who giveth to all life and breath and all things. But the Bible is not a book of science or philosophy, though it is both scientific and philosophical. It is a book revealing to the world God and man and their relation to each other. That is to say, it is a book of religion; for religion is in fact nothing else than the relation between the Infinite and the finite, between the Father and His children. Whatever else the Bible contains seems incidental and tributary to this. But this relation between the Father and His child is not one of mere form. Neither is it a figure of speech that is borrowed from the child's relation to his earthly father. Religion, or the relation

between the Father and His child, implies a life that is common to both, a life which, though Divine, dwells in man, making him a child of the ever-living God, his Father.

The Spiritual Order.

We are then by nature a different order of beings from the rest of creation. Other things are creatures, but we are children whose chief glory is that we are made in the image of God and crowned of God with glory and honor. We are of a spiritual order, and God has not left us without the clearest proof of this fact. We have the evidence of it in the bountiful provisions which He has made for our spiritual life; we have the consciousness of it in our spiritual experiences; and we have the revelation of it in the only begotten Son of God, whose mission to the world was to reveal to us not only the nature of God the Father, but be to us the type of the spirit-

ual order to which we belong. But the needs and comforts of our physical natures are so great and so numerous that we too often forget our high calling and the care we should give to the spiritual life. In our self-conscious greatness we become self-dependent and self-centered. We thus deprive ourselves of God's life and power, and weaken our spiritual life and pervert its energies to unworthy acts and ends. And yet, it is no misfortune to us that we are burdened with bodies; it is rather a blessing to us that our physical natures call for care and courage. Were it not for this we should more probably grovel as the animal in sensual things instead of rising and walking erect as the sons and daughters of God Almighty. We must consider and realize that we belong to the higher order, the order of the children of light, and that there are better things for us than the acrid. bitter, poison-

ous fruit of evil deeds and misdirected spiritual energies, and act accordingly. By nature we are religious; that is, between the Father and His children there is the relation respectively of providence and dependence, of condescension and duty. This relation God recognizes, and in His infinite goodness fulfills His obligations toward us without the shadow of failure. To us is given the duty as well as the unspeakable privilege, as His children, of reciprocating His devotion, remembering what sort of beings we are since we are given the power to think and feel and do and live in harmony with the God and Father of infinite truth and goodness.

The Selective Soul.

The bee does not gather gum or pitch. It gathers honey, because it is by nature a honey gatherer. It instinctively flies from flower to flower, going many miles for its

little burden and when it has gathered all it can carry it takes a "bee-line" back to its hive and the honey cell. It has the selective instinct, and though acids and poisons may be found in abundance it gathers only what its nature calls for and passes all else by. Thus each animal and bird and reptile and insect naturally selects from the great world around it the food and home and shelter, and leads the life that its nature calls for and is happy and contented. They go about their work of selection with such care and at times so opportune that they seem to have forethought and wisdom surpassing even that of man.

It is different with us. We make more mistakes in our choices than the lower animals do, though our lives are infinitely more significant than theirs. But the reason they make fewer mistakes in their selections is, not because they are wiser than we, but because their wisdom is not their

own, but God's who does their thinking and choosing for them. They are things of the natural, impersonal order, while we are of the spiritual order and therefore able to think and act for ourselves. It is true that we are not sufficient unto ourselves. Hence, as children and not as things the Father of all grace and goodness provides for us, teaches, directs, and disciplines us. There is a spirit in man and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding. It is because we are spirits that we are capable of inspiration, and the Father of our spirits instructs us. But because we are intelligent spirits we also have the power to act and think independently, and in the infinite world of moral and material things exercise our souls in the selection of all that determines our character and destiny.

First of all, then, it is our duty to study ourselves and know what our natures re-

quire and make the selections that they call for that we may have abundant spiritual life and health and that we may be able to fulfill our calling of spiritual manhood. But we are not left without light in discharging this duty to ourselves. There is a true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world, and the proof that all men have that Light, and by it the right, or power, to become the sons of God, is their ability to appreciate and practice honesty, charity, gratitude, faith, purity, and righteousness. For no soul is incapable of loving God and all that God loves, if he loves flowers and music and children and benevolence and justice and freedom and truth and sacrifice, for God is in them all and loves them all. No soul that loves these is dead or totally depraved. All, therefore, may reach forth and partake of the Bread of life and drink at the living Fountain. This is our Father's will

concerning us. The Master calls us to follow His steps. Did He not say also that His own meat and drink was to do the will of His Father? And did He not also say that whosoever did the will of His Father the same was His nearest kinsman, even His brother, His sister, His mother? Our choices are to be put into action. This do, and thou shalt live, is the way of life. Faith, repentance, prayer, obedience, and self-sacrifice are all included in the soul's act of choosing the way and doing the will of God.

The more one reflects upon his own nature and the character of the world and of human life, the more does it appear to be true, though amazing, that all things are His. There is much that can not be selected for one's good. But we possess the independent power of choice, not that we may select harmful things, but choose what our higher natures require and what

we should select if we did not act unnaturally. In the world we find dishonesty, impurity, injustice, cruelty, and crime; we see error and selfishness and intolerance and unbelief and irreverence; we meet with obscenity, vulgarity, and blasphemy in literature and in living forms. But these are not intended for us, and he who considers his nature and what is for his own good will never select them. The world that is native to the soul is that of the true, the beautiful, and the good, in nature, in art, in literature, and in life; the world of love and joy and service and sacrifice; the world of friendship, home, the Church, and, above all, the world of Divine things, even God Himself in whom we live and move and have our being. And the man who has the selective spiritual instinct will live only in this world. It is the only world that he will allow himself to enjoy, because he sees that it is the

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only world that can afford satisfaction to his higher nature. He chooses it, and while he finds it congenial to his spiritual nature, he glorifies God in his wise choice and God also glorifies him by beautifying his soul with all the graces of the Spirit and giving to him moral fiber that will not yield to any act that is unworthy of a man of God.

The Constructive Life.

The life of living things determines the forms they take in their growth. Two seeds are planted in the same soil. They are refreshed by the same showers, the same atmosphere is to each the breath of life, and both are kissed heavenward by the same sunlight. But how different they are in form! One becomes a modest violet with its frail form and drooping flower, while the other, after centuries of growth and conflict with seasons and

storms, becomes a giant oak, the monarch of the forest. The difference is due to the different kinds of life in the seeds. In one is the violet-life, in the other is the oak-life, and each life force has a constructive method of its own. Both lives reach out and gather from the soil and the atmosphere and the moisture the materials their forms require, and of them they build, each its own form, the one the violet form, the other the oak form.

In the same natural way Christian character is built. It is determined by the constructive Life which the soul possesses and has selected. Character is not made as the wax plant is made, by additions of dead material, but it grows according to the law of the Christ-life which is in the soul. The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes us free from the law of sin and death. Sin deforms because it is destructive of moral beauty and power; but

the Christ-life, having its law and method of development, builds character after the Divine Type.

The difference between the world of nature and the world of grace is not in the law of growth or the method of growth, but in the degree of life and the materials which that life is constructing into the living form. The Christian's life is the Christ-life. "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. This Christ-life gives him tastes and affinities which lead him to think on whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, and all things that are virtuous and praiseworthy, and of such materials his character is formed. The man who has a sensual life has tastes for sensual things and constructs a sensual

character. He is a man of a different mold. He has the carnal desires of the flesh and of the mind, and as a soul he is abnormal in size and deformed in figure. He has not the Christ-life and hence does not grow Christ-like. But when He who came that we might have life and have it more abundantly is formed within, no art surpasses the beauty of form that the character takes on. The entire soul is quickened by the same all-pervading life, so that each faculty is invigorated and symmetrically related to every other. The will is strengthened, but the character does not become obstinate, because the reason is unfolded also. Love for the right becomes enthusiastic, but it is not intolerant and bigoted, because patience toward all men and humility and meekness, most beautiful Christian graces, enter into the Christian form. The imagination takes a loftier range, but the man does not become visionary and im-

practical, for the cultured mind gives to the structure a framework that is durable and strong. Faith grows and the Christian becomes hopeful, even optimistic, and believes that God will cause all things to work together for good to those who love Him, but he does not shift his responsibility and become slothful and indolent in his personal morals or in his neighborly feelings or his world-wide sympathies. He trusts the Spirit for guidance and strength, but he does not feel excused from seeking all the help and light he can get from every possible source or from developing more strength by the use of what he really has. The Christ-formed man is symmetrical in his character. "To faith he adds virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control patience, to patience godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love."

And yet some Christian characters may

not be as beautiful to the observer as many who have not the Christ-life. Some men are badly born and bred, and compare very unfavorably with others, in whose veins flows the blood of a long line of noble ancestry. But when the Divine, the Christ-life, enters the soul, a process of reparation begins. A Power greater than evil takes possession of the mind, the heart, and the will. It mortifies, that is, puts to death the deeds of the body, that is, the passions of the sensual nature. Sin may have blighted all that was beautiful in the soul, but the new life begins at once the process of restoration. The blood, that is, the life of Jesus Christ, cleanses from all sin, so that even the man of the slums, who was born beyond the dead-line of society and reared in an atmosphere too foul to be pictured, may possess the life which the man more highly favored may not have, and have a future that reaches upward and

onward toward the infinite and the eternal. He may be a child of God, and to himself it may not yet even appear what he shall be, because he has within him the power of an endless life. But having life, he grows in grace and knowledge of the truth, and when Christ who is his life appears, as sometime He surely will, he shall awake and behold that he is like the Son of God!

The Life Eternal.

All life has the power to resist death, but the duration of its resisting to death is determined by the kind of life it is. The Divine life alone has the power to resist through all time, and continue unchanged forever. God alone is from everlasting to everlasting. But the most significant fact about the eternity of God is, not His mere ceaseless existence, but His perfect personality. He is a being of infinite holiness and excellence. The same is true of the

finite orders of life. Not their years of existence, but their type of life, the volume of living power that they possess is the chief consideration. God is not God because He is everlasting, but He is everlasting because he is God. The oak is not an oak because it lives five hundred years, but it lives that long because it has oak-life that is allowed unhindered to live out its natural lifetime. Likewise the most significant fact about the Divine life in man is, not that the one who possesses it shall never die, but that he is a personal, moral intelligence having the power that is indestructable and capable of endless development from glory to still higher glory, eternally approaching Him who in His exaltation is unapproachable. This is life eternal to know Him the true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. And this knowledge of God and of His Son Jesus Christ is not simply an intellectual

apprehension of the existence of the Divine Being. It is the actual possession of moral excellencies such as characterize God alone. A true knowledge of God can be nothing else than likeness to God. It is only what a person is that he feels and knows with certainty. When he is God-like he knows God, just as when he is human he knows man. Thus it is that a knowledge of God is equivalent to eternal life.

What kind of life a soul possesses that knows not God in the sense of possessing the character and life of God, and how long it by its very nature will be able to endure, may be a question of interpretation and opinion on which the most devout scholars differ. However, it certainly is true that he that sins against God wrongs his own soul. Sin is destructive and produces an unnatural condition in the soul that practices it. It deprives the soul of

the Divine life, and self-limitation is the consequence. The will is weakened, the intellect loses its grasp, the memory its tenacity, and the imagination its flight. The religious nature becomes deranged, love is perverted, spiritual perception is darkened, faith turns to doubt, and hope dies. If the soul severed from God continues on forever, it can not be said to live. Its self-centered, self-consuming fire of passion and perverted powers is a death rather than a life. But the glory of the life that we have in Christ is, not that it is endless, but that its joys are unspeakable, its visions of truth are ever widening, its horizon of light is ever encircling new spheres of knowledge, its love ever widening in sympathy, embracing every interest of the cross of Christ, every object of the love of God. This is eternal life in the highest sense. What less could our Lord give, what else did He mean when He who

is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person said, "I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish?" Whatever may be the future state of the soul that has no life and hope in Christ, those who live in Him have nothing to fear. Of this they are assured: since Christ, who is the life, lives, they shall live also. They shall live because they have the kind of life which shall enable them forever to resist death. We know not what it means to have the power of an endless life. It is a mere hint of revelation, but it suggests that with it the eternities are born within us. Such life will keep the soul forever young. Possessing the Divine life, the spirit immortal shall eternally rise from strength to strength, from holiness to holiness, from light to light, from glory to glory, ever taking on more perfectly the likeness of the perfect Christ.

Such is the heritage of the children of God. What more could be possible, what more is desirable? We shall be like Him. We shall see Him as He is.

Does not that suffice?

THE LIGHT OF LIFE.

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"So much the rather thou Celestial Light,
Shine inward, and the mind through all her pow'rs
Irradiate, there plant eyes; all mist from thence
Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
Of things invisible to mortal sight."

—*Milton.*

"Earth 's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God;
But only he who sees takes off his shoes,
The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries,
And daub their natural faces unaware
More and more from their first similitude."

—*Mrs. Browning.*

CHAPTER IV.

THE LIGHT OF LIFE.

Each man's life differs from that of every other man, and his life constructs for him a world which also differs from that which every other man beholds. It is not the eye that sees, or the ear that hears, or any or all senses together that determine the type and set the bounds of our respective worlds. Helen Keller's world is infinitely greater and sublimer than that of millions whose physical senses are all perfectly developed. One may have eyes and see not, and ears and hear not. The eye may see the canvas, but it is the soul that sees the picture. The ear may hear the sound, but it is the inner life that hears the song and the lan-

guage of intelligence. The character and dimensions of each man's world depend upon the volume and the kind of soul-life which he possesses. The poet gives poetic beauty and form to all that he sees and thinks upon. He sees love and truth and majesty and strength and hears music and language and laughter where the prosy spirit takes no delight, hears no song and learns not a line of instruction. The vulgar man sees a world of vulgarity because he himself is vulgar. He clothes even the pure and beautiful with vulgarity. He has a relish for disreputable resorts, vicious people, the obscene book, and the immoral story. The light that is in him is darkness, and great is the darkness. The pessimist sees a bad world that is getting worse. He sees no seven-colored bow of promise in the clouds. He doubts all men and impeaches all motives. He questions whether life is even worth living and wonders why

he or any one ever was born. The selfish man also has his world. It is small like himself. No matter about other folks, if matters with him go wrong all is wrong. His life is self-centered and his world is limited to his own door-yard. The good man and the great has a world also and like himself its horizon has no limit. It embraces heaven and earth and is filled with all the grandeur of truth and beauty and goodness. It is God's dwelling place and the habitation of all the just.

Thus each one projects himself into all he sees and thinks about. The world, human society, the family institution, religion, revelation, the Christian Church, the infinite God and Father, all take the character of the soul that beholds them. They all stand forth in the light of his own inner life. As his life increases in volume and strength and spirituality, approaching in its abundance the life of the ever-living

Christ, the higher becomes the order of the world that becomes real to his soul. The discords, the misadjustments, the contradictions, the dark mysteries, the fragmentary appearance of God's good and perfect world are more and more dissolved in the light of his higher life. The significance of each part in its relation to the whole is more fully recognized and values are given to each in truer proportions.

The Spiritual World.

There is a world of spiritual realities visible only to the eye that is trained for the unseen. They do not come within the grasp of the well-trained intellect as such; they are not proved by mathematical formula; they can not be demonstrated by logical process; they elude the microscope and the analysis of the scientist; they are beyond the flight of the poet's imagination; they can not be purchased by the

millionaire; they are not revealed at altars of incense; they are not obtained by pilgrimages to sacred shrines. If by any or all these means the secret of the Lord is made plainer, it is not by any one of them that they are first discerned. Such is the nature of God and the things of His Spirit that they elude the sight of him who would in his own way search to find them out. But this does not render them incredible. We can not see music or lay our hands upon a proposition in mathematics. So, too, "the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned." God has established fixed laws and conditions of knowing all that is knowable. In order to be happy we must seek first, not happiness, but its conditions; that is, harmony with Him. Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and then all

things can be added. The conditions required for seeing the things of the spiritual world are not unreasonable, neither do they differ from those required for seeing the world of nature about us. When we look upon the material world the eye conveys to the soul impressions of natural objects, but it is not the eye that sees; it is the soul which recognizes the form and color of objects, distinguishes, compares, and reasons about them. The higher the order of soul-life in the beholder, the larger and better is the world in which he moves and takes delight. The world that he sees corresponds with the organ of soul-sight which he possesses.

In like manner the spiritual world is visible only to the soul that is capable of discerning the things of the Spirit of God. The inner life is of the spiritual order and in character is like the world that is visible to the soul. The pure in heart shall see

God, and blessed are they; but he that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love.

The conditions required for seeing the realities of the spiritual world are spiritual, and it is a joy unspeakable to know that it is so. For in this life the inequalities of birth and education and opportunity and surrounding and influence are so great that should the degree of knowledge that we might have of the kingdom of God and our admission to it depend upon these things, there are some most worthy of it who could never enter and many who are out of all moral likeness and sympathy with it who would be the first to see its glories. Then it is a satisfaction to know that the first shall be last and the last first. A broken spirit and a humble and a contrite heart are the only conditions of becoming the children of God and seeing the Father's face.

In Christ was life and the life was the light of men. Christian light depends upon the presence of the Christ-life in the soul. Thus is Christ both the light and the life of the world, and He is the light because He is the life. He that has the Son has life, and he that has the life has light. The spiritual world is known to the soul in which Christ dwells, because it is flooded with spiritual light. Christ gives to the soul the power to see the transcendent realities of the kingdom of heaven, and also establishes the kingdom within for the soul to see and take delight in. The spiritual realities of the kingdom of heaven are facts of experience, just as the material realities of the outer world are, but with this essential difference: The outer world is revealed to the soul through the physical senses, while the spiritual world is revealed directly to the inner consciousness and so becomes a matter of clearer knowledge

than the material world does. The eye or the ear or the touch may deceive, but what the soul feels can not be false. The man who has the Christ-life has also the Christ-light. The life causes the light. The man who is in Christ and in whom Christ is formed, knows that he has passed from death unto life, for life is of such a nature that its presence can not be mistaken. The man who is thus quickened by the Spirit and born from above, sees, enters into and enjoys the world that is native to his soul. He is in the kingdom and the kingdom is within him. He is a part of the spiritual world and is in sympathy with all the rest. His joys are unspeakable and he is filled with all spiritual understanding. His knowledge of the spiritual world is limited exceedingly, it is true. He knows but little of God, but how much does he know of himself or of his brother or even the worm that crawls at his feet? And yet he knows

God, for he is upheld by His grace, guided by His Spirit, cheered by His promise, led by His hand, kept by His power. He sees God where he had never before supposed Him to be. Even the world about him appears in a different light. It is a new world because he is a new creature in Christ Jesus. "Old things have passed away and behold! all things have become new."

Discoveries in Redemption.

Columbus did not make America, he simply discovered it. But for ages it had waited with all its wealth beyond the sea for the coming of bold mariners who should tell the world its secrets. The earth rolled on its axis and revolved in its orbit around the sun countless ages before Copernicus and Kepler and Galileo were born. To them is due, not the motion of the heavenly bodies, but the discovery that the sun is a central orb and that the earth

and the planets are a harmonious family of worlds. The laws of nature are not of human origin or of modern invention. They are as old as the universe. They are God's method of creating and upholding His handiwork. But to man has been given the task of discovering and the duty of observing them. We do not make truth or devise principles of right conduct. What we know of the truth and the right we get by our earnest effort, aided by revelation, but they are of divine origin and eternal.

The same is true of God's gracious work of human redemption. The Spirit helps us in our discovery of the glorious fact that we are redeemed, but the work of our redemption is God's. Before we were born, before the race came into being, the world's redemption was wrought. The Lamb of God was slain from the foundation of the world. Redemption is eternal.

Time and temporal things have brought no changes to Jehovah's heart. Yesterday, to-day, and forever God is love. In love the world was created and in love it was redeemed. Both were conceived in the infinite Heart with the same impulse of love. When human creation became an accomplished fact, it was then that all the gracious provisions for the redemption of a sinful world began to be historically manifest. As the spiritual life of the world developed the method of redemption unfolded. As more and more through the ages the life of the Spirit inspired the souls of holy men, nearer and still nearer the method of redemption approached the culmination of the Incarnation and the gift of the Spirit. And when at last a few, scarcely twelve, were able adoringly to cry out "My Lord and My God," and the Master had deemed it expedient that He depart out of the world, it was then that

the Spirit came to perpetuate the full-orbed revelation of human redemption in the world by keeping ever fresh and real in the heart of the Church the condescension, character, teaching, life, death, and resurrection of the Son of Man.

But infinitely great as God is in His fatherly affection for the children of men; deep as were the sorrows which the Savior bore and lonely and rough the road that was trodden by His weary feet; precious as would be the comfort of the Spirit to every one, yet, in order to be blessings to the soul they must become realized. The prodigal may starve in a foreign country while all the time his Father loves him and longs for his home-coming. The spiritual world is a reality to those who have been born of the Spirit, but it waits with all its wonders of redeeming love for the coming of the unborn children of God that they may for the

first time look upon its realities and delight in its joys.

But every man has that with which he may begin the discovery of the glorious truths of his redemption. To every man is given a measure of faith. In Christ was life, and the life was the light of men. That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. To all men is given the power to become the sons of God. The beginnings of salvation are latent in every soul. Every man has that with which to begin the Christian life, that with which to begin his immortality. It may be extirpated by misuse, or it may be used and the Divine life pulsate within him and its light shine more and more unto the perfect day. The lifeless, sightless soul knows nothing of the fadeless glories of redeeming grace. But the child in whom is born the Divine life experiences the grace and the glad-

ness of a world whose horizon ever and ever recedes as by the light of that life he tries to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height and know the love of Christ that passes knowledge and be filled with all the fullness of God.

Christian Fellowship.

The likeness of the inner life of Christians is the ground of their fellowship. They are children of a common Heavenly Father and are partakers of the Divine nature. Through this Divine relationship their affections become responsive to the same higher things. The saving grace and goodness of God, our Lord's matchless character and sacrificial sufferings, the consciousness of sins forgiven, the abiding presence and witness of the Spirit, the feeling of love toward God and men, the hope which is an anchor to the soul, sure

and steadfast, the joyful thrill of eternal life that gives to the heart youth and buoyancy, these and all other matters of the spiritual life are inspiring themes to every Christian. The character of their love and the elevating influence of the things which they love and contemplate give strength and purity to the bond of their fellowship. There is no tie that binds together the lives of men that is not made more secure and sacred by the filial feeling which they have toward their Father in Heaven and the love they bear to their Redeemer.

The likeness of the life which they have in Christ makes their understanding of spiritual experiences mutual and enables them to speak familiarly upon subjects that have been of profoundest interest to men and women of God in all ages. Two historians may converse intelligently and profitably upon topics of history which would be without interest and beyond the

understanding of the unlettered man. The philosopher or the scientist can not engage the conversation of the uneducated upon subjects of science or philosophy, because he has no knowledge of such things and his language is too limited for him to understand them. But where there is a knowledge of Christ and His salvation, heart may speak to heart on what they feel to be true, though upon other themes they may speak together in none other than an unknown tongue. The more abundant life that Christians have, the deader are the differences of opinions and creeds and churches which they may hold. The letter killeth but the Spirit giveth life, and where the life is strong and full it throws off the external and the non-essential shells of creed and caste and makes all children of God brethren in Christ and gives to all a common sympathy and interest in the salvation of men and the world conquest

of the kingdom of our Lord. Christian fellowship has a language, too, that is not spoken. We can not speak our best thoughts. Life and love are deeper than language and logic. Our Lord had many things to say unto His disciples which they could not bear, but He acted them. His infinite life, His redeeming love, His sanctifying truth, struggled with the impossible when they tried to speak with human voice and express themselves in the human tongue. But when He wept at the grave of the dead, when He washed His disciples' feet, when He stilled the billows of Galilee, when He forgave the outcast woman, when in Gethsemane He prayed with bleeding brow, when silent in the judgment and when suffering on the cross, He spoke the language of Divinity. Christ spoke His love for the world by what He was and what He did. The Divine nature in the children of God is likewise best expressed

in looks and deeds and character. By these they may hold fellowship and be best understood when language fails. Walking in the light they have fellowship one with another. Thanks be unto God for His gift unspeakable.

The Living Church.

The Church of the living God must be a living Church. Scholarly though the ministry may be, cultured though the congregations are that listen to able discourses from the pulpit and delightful music from organ and trained voices, beautiful in form and fitness as the service of the sanctuary may be, and elegant in art and noble in architecture the house of worship, they can not keep the Church alive or save it from decay if the body of its membership has ceased to be the temple of the Holy Ghost. Nor is the absence of these any assurance of the Spirit's pres-

ence. The most unpretentious parish in country or village or city may be thrice dead, plucked up by the roots. God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. The Church or congregation that is proud of its simplicity and its illiteracy is as great an offense to the Holy Spirit as the Church that prides itself in its wealth and culture and ceremonialism. The Church that humbles itself is exalted and the one that exalts itself is abased. The moral attitude of the Church toward God is its only justification. Its moral sympathy and union with the living Head of the Church makes it a living Church. Life is the need of the Church. A lifeless Church is a sightless Church. It is a blind leader of the blind. The living Church is an evangelizing, teaching, saving Church. It feels the Savior's power and knows the truth of the great Teacher. Faithfully it points and

leads men to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. From its altars go forth the youth who hold the future in their hands, and their lips and tongues are touched with fire. Its colleges and its schools are centers of Christian light, because their teachers have the abundant life and forget not that the Christian life is the highest life and that Christian culture is the highest culture. The living Church is a revival Church. In it Christ is believed to be the power of God and the wisdom of God. It preserves its creed not in its colleges and its libraries and its Catechisms and its standards of faith, but in the hearts of consecrated men and women. The heart makes the best theologian. It loves where it is unable to understand. The uneducated man who loves God knows Him better than the scholar who loves Him not. Recitation of creeds and articles of faith is no better than parrot's

talk if there is no illuminating Divine life within the soul. Dead faith is more dangerous than honest doubt can be, for doubt that is honest has life and has its face toward the light, but dead faith gropes in the darkness not even feeling after God.

The human heart is God's holy of holies. It is there that He preserves the faith once delivered unto the saints. Neither colleges nor creeds nor books nor even Bibles can save the Church or the Christian from lapsing into disbelief and dead formalism should the life and the witness of the Spirit be lost. The world is to be saved by individuals through and in the Christ rather than by books. Valuable as books are and inestimably valuable as the Bible is as a means to faith and the knowledge of God, the light of the Divine life in the soul is necessary to interpret the hidden meaning of the Holy Book, and where the life is dead and the light is dark-

ness the meaning of the Spirit's message is missed. The Bible is an inspired book to the reader who is responsive to the Spirit's illumination, but to him who would read it in the dim light of his own poor understanding it is almost a sealed book. The living Church is an inspired Church. Her ministers are lineal successors of the prophets and the apostles through the Spirit. Her teachers are taught the truths of the master Teacher by the same Spirit. Her members live in spiritual fellowship, seeing eye to eye, and walk together in the light of the Lord and realize in part at least the fullness of their redemption and the realities of the spiritual world.

THE MISSION OF MYSTERY.

So sometimes comes to soul and sense
The feeling which is evidence
That very near about us lies
The realm of spiritual mysteries.
The sphere of the supernal powers
Impinges on this world of ours.
The low and dark horizon lifts,
To light the scenic terror shifts;
The breath of a diviner air
Blows down the answer of a prayer:—
That all our sorrow, pain, and doubt
A great compassion clasps about,
And law and goodness, love and force
Are wedded fast beyond divorce.
Then duty leaves to lore its task,
The beggar Self forgets to ask;
With smile of trust and folded hands,
The passive soul in waiting stands
To feel, as flowers the sun and dew,
The One true Life its own renew.

—*Whittier.*

CHAPTER V.

THE MISSION OF MYSTERY.

The avowed skeptic is not the only one who has his doubts. Nor is the absence of doubt in the believer sure proof that he always really believes.

In the absence of tests, faith may be simply a passive mental process having no moral content whatever. To be merely an heir or recipient of what others have believed is not faith, for faith implies mental and moral activity. He who has never suffered in the dungeon of doubt may well wonder whether he yet has had enough experience in the perplexing things of life to put to the test what faith he may possess. Or, he may question whether he knows enough of the ways of God to have

any good ground for what he believes or be sure that he really believes much of anything. But, supposing there are those whose faith never fails them even in the severest tests, there are many more who are equally earnest, whose faith often gives way to doubt and despair on account of the dark things of the world and life. For the presence of so much physical and moral evil in a world that is thought to be governed by a beneficent God, has caused more believers to doubt and has driven to despair more seekers after truth than perhaps any other fact of human experience. Nor is this surprising. When we think of the uncertainty, obscurity, physical evil, and moral disorder that exist, the wonder is that there are not even more who doubt whether there be any good Providence and moral order in the world. Evil and error of every kind have wrought such ruin and still run riot to such a de-

gree that it looks as though there were an almost infinite demon at work in the world whose mischief makes about as much misery as God's goodness gives of peace and happiness.

Honest doubters, for there are such, are always deserving of sympathy rather than censure. No one should be blamed because in the midst of life's mysteries he is unable to leap with a bound to faith's beautiful height or see sun clear when apparently only darkness surrounds him. There are occasions of doubt, but faith and hope have their firm ground and for that reason are more justifiable than doubt, and in the rising soul will win at last. Upon the throne sits One who rules in righteousness. His throne is white, and in the whiteness of purity and true light He rules this world of ours and gives to the dark mysteries of life a beneficent mission to man.

Occasions for Doubt.

We live in a world of mystery. No matter which way we turn we are sure to meet with mystery before we have gone far. It is therefore not taking a somber view of life to recognize the dark things that are matters of common experience and observation with all men. Think of the suffering and poverty and idiocy and insanity and blindness and deafness and deformity and injustice and slander and crime and disgrace and corrupt morals and death there is in the world from which the good as well as the evil must suffer! The human race, as a whole, has ever been and is yet a seething mass of helpless, benighted, abortive creatures. A sluggish, stupid stream it has been, winding its weary way through the tanglewood and marsh of time, having its stagnations, its backwaters, and its divided currents which for the most part have lost their way.

There are hundreds of millions of human beings in the nations of the Orient and in the crowded cities of the western hemisphere who are of little or no good to the world. One hundred million people might be swept from existence in the heart of China and the world would move on without missing them. Plagues and epidemics and famines and wars and persecutions and earthquakes and disasters have swept multiplied millions from the earth as though they were of no more worth than so many insects. If the world is created and governed by an infinitely good God, of what use to His world can there be in reptiles and vermin and poisonous insects and parasites and bacteria and thistles and thorns and noxious weeds? Why is disease contagious and health not? Why, if sin should exist, does it bring its pleasures so soon and reserve its sorrows for a day of reckoning, while righteous-

ness is so tardy with its rewards? In the lower order of being instinct is the sure guide, and for man's animal life instinct and a small degree of intelligence are sufficient; but for emancipation of the mind and the upward flight of the soul's aspirations, for peace of heart and joy of hope, for sure knowledge of the truth and the right of an undisturbed confidence in a beneficent purpose and end for the world and life is it not strange that we have not more to help and less to hinder? Yes, we have the Bible, but hundreds of sects and tens of thousands of teachers differ and divide on what the Bible means. Some say it is not inspired, some say it is inspired a little, some say parts are inspired, while others say every word is inspired. Some deny the possibility of miracles, others teach that the days of miracles are past, while still others hold that miracles have not ceased to be. Is the human race

a degenerate offspring from perfect parents spotless from their Maker's hand, or is man the product of an almost endless process of evolution, which began countless ages ago, of which fire mist, protoplasm, mollusk, monkey, man, is an epitome? Is death the end? Where are the departed, and why may we not hold fellowship with them? Why should such a large per cent of the race die in infancy, and so few of those who survive ever rise above the plane of the animal life? What have the dead and forgotten nations and literature and arts and civilizations and achievements of the early centuries signified for the present age? If there is light, there is also darkness; if truth, there is error usually mixed with it; if goodness, there is evil always near it, often looking even more attractive and better than the good; if songs of joy, they all have their notes of sadness. Alas! the list of evils that look

like stains upon God's white throne is almost endless. The darkness that occasions doubt deepens as one tries to enumerate and explain the mysteries that make up the dark hemisphere of our world's life, and yet we must not doubt, much less despair.

Wisdom Not Our Own.

It is fortunate for us that we do not have our own way more than we do. Certainly nothing could be more fatal to our well being than that we should have just what we want. Should God take us by the hand and lead us through the world, answering all our whys and wherefores, solving for us all our problems and explaining all mysteries; should He grant our desires concerning health and long life and toil and ease and happiness; should we realize our ambitions for wealth and distinction and influence and authority; should we be

kept blissfully ignorant of all our faults and defects and mistakes, and be shielded from public censure and a piercing conscience when we do wrong; should we be kept from contact with the disgusting and unsightly objects of disease and sin and brutishness and villainy and degradations and all distressing types of humanity; should we be taken into the Divine council about seasons and storms and temperature and all the laws by which the course of nature runs; should laws have no penalty, sin no retribution, and we be made the unconditional recipients of happiness, prosperity, peace, and eternal life; should these and all other rash wishes of our selfishness, ignorance, and vanity be granted us, what would be the consequence? We should have a world void of all beauty, life, excellence, and order; a world of misery, darkness, and death. This and nothing more.

No one is wise enough to know all that is best for himself or for others or for the world, much less for the ages to come. And yet who is so blind as not to see that most of the mysteries of life have been good things in disguise? He may not see them all to be so. No one is wise enough for that. But if he viewed life in its true perspective, if he saw from the central position of the throne of wisdom and love, is it not probable, even certain, that he would see all things working together for good? In that light would he not see light? In our thoughtlessness we wish that we might see the beneficent end of our sufferings, if there be one, and in our selfishness and weakness wish that we might reap the benefits and be spared the pain, little thinking that we would have to be infinite in our provisions to see the end and that it would only be pampering our

peevishness to be spared the ordeal of suffering.

It is the creed of some and the thought of most people, at times, that there is an evil one, some rival power who is the foe of God and the human race, who is the author of all this darkness and destruction. They will not have it that an infinitely good and wise God is responsible for so much confusion in this world. They therefore vindicate God and indict the devil, who, it seems, is almost equal to God and in much gets the best of Him. If this could be done it would be an easy way for us to justify our impatience in times of trouble. We could then charge them up to the devil and be as vindictive as we wished. But it would not be so easy a matter to point out where infinite wisdom and goodness end, and where the evil work begins, or, what is evil and what is good, and to

whom and under what circumstances they are such. Any attempt to point out what is the work of Divine goodness in this world and what the mischief of a demon would be vain. Two rulers whose powers are respectively in any proportion to the evil and the good that exist would be a fatal dualism. We are not in a position to know what evil and good always are. The only safe attitude is that of faith in God's infinite wisdom and goodness. We can with confidence depend upon God. He does not share His authority with another. We may not know, but we know that He knows. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" He sees the end from the beginning, and toward that end He beneficently works.

The Race in Training.

That the world is full of mystery no one who seriously considers will deny.

But what is it all for? Why should God so hide Himself, why should He be so jealous of knowledge in us? In such questions as these there is danger of arrogance. We are not in the world as God's guests to be entertained by Him. Though we may be here because God has so willed it, still, it is conceivable that He should intend that the world should be something more than a pleasure ground and that life should mean more than leisure. We are here, not as guests to be entertained, but as pupils to be taught and trained in truth and righteousness. For the good of the race this is the best world conceivable from any point of view. Whatever position one may take as to man's primitive moral and social condition, whether that of a high degree of intelligence, purity of morals, and a philanthropic spirit, or that of an undeveloped savage allied to the beasts of the field, we certainly find that from the

beginning of reliable history to the present time there has been development and progress. The race had before it the world as a field for valor and conquest. There were unsailed seas, unexplored continents, undiscovered laws, undeveloped resources, and an unseen universe of spiritual forces. The world was new and the race was young, just the kind of a world that the race needed. But, had the world been a thing so small and simple as to call forth no action and courage, or had the race been so perfected at the beginning that it saw in the world no secrets and nothing to master, it would have died in infancy and the world would have remained a waste place to this day. But the civilization and commerce and laws and government and inventions and discoveries of nature's secrets, the arts and literature and science and philosophy and ethics and theology, the philanthropy and charities and morals

and intelligence and religion of this age show that the race saw from the beginning its goal, or that a God had been in the world guiding man toward its divine destiny. The end is far in the dim future, but there is a beneficent end and when it is reached it will reveal a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

But toil and suffering and pain and agony and starvation and cruelty and scourges and slaughter and death have been the cost. But a twofold reward has been the purchase, and they could have been secured at no other price. The world has been made more beautiful, life more secure, and hope and happiness more the common lot of men. But the crowning good that has resulted from all the toil and suffering and mystery of life is their influence upon the higher nature of the individual. The disuse of any capacity of

the soul results in its extirpation, just as the disuse of the body causes its degeneration. Our higher nature, therefore, required a sphere for its activity and if we did not act voluntarily we needed a chastening rod to drive us along, and infinite goodness has so ordained it.

We are placed in a world where diverse facts are sown broadcast, where forces clash and where struggle for existence is the law of life. By grappling with and overcoming the obstacles, opening the secrets and mastering the forces of the world, the will is called into action, the mind developed, flight given to the imagination, and memory made the mind's rich storehouse. The development of society became a necessity for mutual protection and helpfulness. This has meant the recognition of rights, the laws of justice, the formation of governments, the protection

of the family, the toleration of opinions, and a victory for freedom.

Such achievements required the exercise of wisdom, patience, confidence, courage, and high resolve—all of which was a training in morals, intelligence, and righteousness.

A Spiritual Goal.

But man is chiefly a religious being. He has a capacity for sympathetic union with God. This is the end for which he was created. This is God's plan for every man and He takes a personal interest in each of us, tenderly and constantly leading us on to the end which He has in view for us. To Him the path is seen to be direct, but to us it is devious and often dangerous and the end doubtful. But such is our nature that there seems to be no other way of developing in us the highest degree of spirituality and Divine like-

ness. It seems necessary that all conceivable conditions of life, every form of experience, and great uncertainty as to the future and mystery about the past be our lot, to develop all the powers of our being and bring every soul safely to the beneficent goal of His creation. The faith faculty must be developed. Faith is one of the noblest powers of the human soul. But its development requires a sphere of action in which logic can not lead us, where reason must follow the lead of faith only to falter at the door of the highest knowledge while faith enters and secures for the inquiring soul the evidences of things not seen. Our love power must be disciplined in a world where there are both worthy and unworthy objects appealing powerfully to us from opposite directions, making it difficult for us to decide our destiny. Unless despair seemed sometimes about to triumph over us, hope could not rise

in the soul and afford us the joys unspeakable. There is philosophy in the inequalities of life and the mutual responsibilities of all, for without them the noble attributes of charity, patience, kindness, justice, and sacrifice could not be unfolded to beautify and glorify the human spirit and the moral world. No man is made for himself alone. Each is made for all and all for each. Hence the conditions of solidarity and the bonds of heredity which occasion so much misery when their laws are violated bring the highest good to all when we recognize our brotherhood to the race and live for the world's good. Every crime against the State and human society, every case of poverty or ignorance or disease or depravity that is traceable to corrupt environments, bad influence, or the evils of industrial strife as its cause, is an appeal to the heart of every man for sympathy, justice, and philanthropy. Every victim

of violated laws of heredity is likewise a plea for purity and righteousness that the sins of the father may not be visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generation, but that thousands of generations may see the great mercies of God because He has been loved and His commandments kept.

Severe as may seem the sufferings of the children of men, and terrible as may be the catastrophes that cause some to stand in silent reverence while others doubt and despair, they are all meant as guides and guards for wayward and weak beings who are called to be children of God and bear their Father's holy likeness. God covets for all men the happiness that can come only to such as are in harmony with Himself. His methods of education vary from severity to gentleness, but in all there is the love of an infinite heart. It is easier for us to see love in His gentle-

ness, but there are times when we all need experiences of a different kind. There are worse things by far than suffering and sorrow and death. To charge God with cruelty and doubt His love for His children; to love wrong rather than right; to be selfish rather than self-sacrificing; to do the things that bring suffering to one's self and to others instead of trying to beautify the world with love and joy and truth and hope; these are far worse than innocent pain and sorrow and death. There are better things for us, too, than ease and health and pleasure, if they can not be attained without the sacrifice of things that are of less value to us. If faith in God and the transfiguration of the soul and the glorification of one's life with patience, hope, peace, and unspeakable joy is what our Heavenly Father most covets for all His children, then the sick-room and the disappointed secluded life

have wrought the greatest triumphs that the angels ever witnessed. The sorrowing old patriarch of Uz knew and held the secret fast when he replied to his accusers, saying: "Behold, I go forward, but He is not there; and backward, but I can not perceive Him; on the left hand where He doth work, but I can not behold Him; He hideth Himself on the right hand that I can not see Him. But He knoweth the way that I take; when He hath tried me I shall come forth as gold."

Our Divine Lord was a man of sorrows and experienced in grief. But the path of suffering which led to His crucifixion led also to His glorification. By this He showed us the mystery without explaining it, that if we would be with Him and be like Him we must follow His steps. If we suffer we shall reign with Him. There is wisdom not like our common philosophy and ways of learning it, of which the

schools know nothing. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and to depart from evil is understanding. The pure in heart shall see God. If we would learn, let us remember that it is to the teachable spirit and the humble heart that the way of knowledge stands open. It is not supposable, however, that we could see His plan for our lives from the beginning to the end. He has many things to teach us, but we can not bear them now. We must learn in life's kindergarten before we can walk with God along the highways of knowledge. Now we know in part, but if we are teachable we shall come to know even as we are known.

But if death should drop the curtain and end the drama of the soul's activities, there would still be good ground for questioning the beneficence of God's government in human affairs. It seems right that we should some time know, as we can

not now, the mysteries that cast their deep shadows around us here, and it is reasonable to believe that when we are able to understand them God will make them plain. Hence, immortality must be implied in our thought of God's dealings with us if we think of Him as good and wise, and think of ourselves as moral beings with a spiritual life to be perfected. Believing this, the dark pall is lifted and this life becomes to us a school of preparation for higher joys and holier associations.

Supremacy of Love.

But vanquished faith may yet ask, why should God create a world that involves so much pain and mystery? This amounts to about the same as asking, why He created the world at all? I can see no other object in creation than supreme love, and that the evil resulting from it is due to the fact that man is man and not God, that

creation is finite instead of infinite. He could not have created it for Himself alone, for that would make Him the personification of infinite selfishness. It could not have been for His own good, for that would imply that He was in need and not self-sufficient, and it is absurd to suppose that He did it for a pastime. Creation is a Divine work in the interest of mortal beings to whom life would be sweet and achievement a delight. He being the perfect one and man's highest good to be realized only in becoming like Him, the pleasure of God is in seeing His children come to know and to love and be like Himself.

As white light is the blending of the seven colors of the solar spectrum, so love is the blending of all moral and intellectual qualities, and supreme love as it is in God is the harmonious balance of all God's attributes. In His love He puts forth His entire nature. Supreme love accounts for

our creation, and that love comprehended our highest good in a way which we can not grasp. It may be well, however, for us to consider what kind of beings we are since supreme love has so hedged us about with laws which make it impossible for us to do wrong and violate our highest good without suffering. It is not infinite cruelty that makes the laws of our being severe, so that when we run against them we are driven back to the better way, though we return torn and bleeding. We are not perfect, therefore suffering is unavoidable and mystery there must be. If our knowledge is not perfect, our ignorance will certainly get us into trouble and we will suffer. If character is attained by choice of right, then our choice must not be interfered with; but we are liable to do wrong, then conscience will give us sorrow. If flesh and blood are not imperishable, then our bodies must be fed and clothed and get

sick and grow old and at last die. Pain can be averted only by destroying the nerves, remorse prevented only by obliterating the memory and the conscience and the will. Death can be prevented only by suppressing life itself. The problems of life and the world are infinitely complex and we have no teacher to make them plain to us. The teacher would need a grasp of things as great as God's to understand them and we should need one equally great to understand the explanations. We can not see, but it is love that holds our eyes. Faith in that Love will give us unspeakable peace. We need not fear, for Supreme Love looks beyond our horizon and compasses the whole sphere of existence and will some time justify to the universe His ways with men. Anything less than this would be unworthy of Him. If we saw in His light we should certainly see that pain and death and dis-

appointment and mystery have a holy mission to us. Love has created and given us our calling. Love is the atmosphere in which we live. Love is everywhere in every form. God is love and love reigns over all.

EVIDENCES OF IMMORTALITY.

Crossing the Bar.

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea.

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell
When I embark.

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar. —*Tennyson.*

CHAPTER VI.

EVIDENCES OF IMMORTALITY.

The immediate and imperative demands of our bodies are so numerous that thoughts upon the life immortal arise only in the quiet hour and when the mind is in its most serious moods. But even then the close similarity of our physical natures to the animal creation leads one often to fear lest we, too, shall go the way of all the earth and die to be no more. When we thus reflect we wonder why the question of immortality might not be settled once and forever by the return of our beloved departed to certify by their presence to the soul's immortality. But we seem to be denied this form of assurance, and that for wise and good reasons. There is no doubt

that, were it not for physical obstructions, we should see the certainty of immortality as clearly as we realize that we have a present existence. But if this life were made a constant seance in which the spirits of the departed should be seen and heard and recognized, it would be far less helpful to our faith and growth in righteousness, than with the denial of such assurance, we should be left, as we are, to trust God for the future and build our hope of immortality upon His grace and the evidences that are at hand for our consideration. This, together with the discipline of our moral and intellectual life in caring for the body and in being worthy members of the family and society, acting all the time under the beneficent laws of love, faith, and justice, is the best possible preparation that we could have for immortality and the realization of it.

The evidences of immortality are not

all in yet, because the limits of human progress and human knowledge are not even suggested by present attainments. With every stage of human progress, in the development of every new science, in every advancement in philosophy, and in the ever freshness of Biblical interpretation there are additional evidences that there is that in man which will survive the dissolution of the body and continue to live. The assurance of this is sufficiently strong to warrant full faith and expectation of the future life.

The Relation of Soul and Body.

The soul and body are entirely unlike each other. The elements that compose the body are continually changing. But through all the changes of bodily tissue the soul remains the same unchanged conscious self. Our souls are not composed of elements that come and go with the years. They are unitary in nature and

retain their identity through all changes. We know ourselves to be the same that we were in childhood.

Again we must note the entire unlikeness of physical and mental facts. The body does not think and hope and remember. These are states or facts of the soul and can not be attributed to any molecular action of the elements of the body or of the brain. In the production of thought, feeling, love, and memory there is a unity and a continuity of process which must be due to an abiding soul or spirit and not to shifting particles of matter that are ever passing to give place for others which shall for a time become the constituent elements of the body. The soul knows itself to be self-active in thought and feeling, and knows itself also to be something different from and higher than mere matter. But there is a vital relation between the soul and the body which can not be

overlooked. They develop together, mutually influence each other, and to all appearances they together cease to be at death. This mutual relation of soul and body is a profound secret and will probably ever remain one of the final mysteries of existence. But mystery does not imply evil and error. It means that there are facts which lie beyond our present power to comprehend. How it is that the body grows weary under mental activity and how the mind is exhausted by strains upon our physical nature, how disease wears upon the mind and how mental anxiety causes nervous collapse, what the state of the soul is upon the dissolution of the body are mysteries indeed, but the mystery does not obscure or invalidate the facts of present consciousness and of the knowing, self-determining, abiding I, over which change and space and time have no destructive power.

The body is, as an organism, perishable and does at last die. The soul retains its conscious identity through life, and it can not be established that upon the death of the body it ceases to exist. Hence, from its character and its continuity, the presumption must forever remain in favor of its continued existence. There is something in man that thinks and feels, but whatever it is, its thought and feeling is that death can not destroy it. But if it should be conceded that it is matter that thinks, then we are shut up to another equally great absurdity, namely, that matter is at war with itself, trying to convince itself that it does not feel and think, because the belief in all ages has been that only spirit feels and thinks. The organized matter composing the human body has thought enough to cause itself to think that it does not think! If there is no soul which does the thinking, then we have

matter, nothing more, writing poetry, history, philosophy, and economics, developing science, mathematics, languages, and literature, building governments, founding religions and a social order. The absurdity is apparent to any one who thinks.

The Philosophy of the Heart.

For practical life the wisdom of the heart is better than that of the head. Love, hope, trust, and sympathy are less erratic than logic, and afford greater comfort in the dearer relations and more serious affairs of life. The heart is instinctive and direct, while the mind is cold in its reasonings and plods to its conclusions.

Immortality overhangs man's spiritual life as the heavens overhang the earth. Whether he rejoices in the hope of a life beyond or fears its consequences, if true, the belief is inextinguishable. The better he becomes, the more exalted his sense of

righteousness is, the more nearly he approaches the likeness of Him who only hath immortality dwelling in light which no man can approach unto, the greater are his longings for an endless life, because he feels more joy in living and more worthy of life. The good man's heart says: "Thy face, Lord, will I seek," and his moral nature points to a capacity for communion with God. It is unthinkable that these lofty aspirations and feelings of the noblest natures that the crown of creation affords should all be extinguished at death as one would snuff the flame of a candle that has burned to its socket.

And no matter how abnormal and unnatural a man may become from lack of moral rectitude and dullness of moral sensibility, the belief in immortality is not thereby extinguished. His hope that he shall live may be unchanged for the fear that he shall, but the belief still remains.

The faith of immortality is a conclusion that is begotten in human nature, and the arguments of reason follow the logic of the heart.

The most frequented places on earth are those silent, sacred spots where beneath bowers of evergreen and perennial foliage lies the sacred dust of our departed ones. These places are dear to us not because we feel that our friends are there, but because there lie the forms that used to speak and smile and toil and suffer, the forms that expressed the thoughts and feelings and love of the dear souls that we knew, and still know though we see them not. The love bonds are still unbroken, but the tie is between the souls that remain and those that are departed. We feel that it is so, and who can convince the heart to feel otherwise? Who would attempt it if it could be done? If it be only a delusion it is a blessed one and full of consolation

to every soul. Immortality is the silver cord that runs through all life and religion and poetry and art and philosophy. It is not begotten by revelation, for it precedes all written revelation. The belief is born of human nature, which is God's oldest book of inspiration; but it is corroborated by His later Book, which is prized by the Christian world as invaluable. Call this belief in immortality, poetry or philosophy or religion or fear or superstition, but correctly speaking it is human nature proclaiming its victory over death. It is that in man which is made only a little lower than Divinity and crowned with glory and honor, speaking with a voice that echoes through the ages "I live forever."

Effort to Compass the Infinite.

The form of the human body shows that it is intended to be the servant of an intelligent spirit, while that of the brute

shows that it was designed to serve a physical life as its only end. The senses of sound and sight and scent and touch and taste are more fully developed in the brute than they are in man, hence, unless we regard man as inferior to the brute, he must have some other and some safer guide than the physical senses for his life. He must have intelligence as the light unto his pathway. And the grace of movement and beauty of form and the adaptations of the body, for an intelligent spirit are in striking contrast with those of the lower animals. The human spirit could make poor use of the body of an ox or an ape, because it has a higher calling than brute instinct and requires a more highly developed body to do its service. But the body reaches its acme of perfection and service early in life, then it is arrested. Thus far the soul has needed the best physical service to give it means and op-

portunity for development. Vigor of body is health and help to the soul. But the progress of the soul is not checked when the development of the body is arrested. The sphere of the body is finite, but the soul aspires toward the infinite and endeavors to compass the boundless. The human body before it is born is marked for a life in this world. No less evidently is the soul adapted to a spiritual life whose sphere of activity opens out into the infinite world of truth and love and beauty and law and usefulness.

But even in this life he has found his body incompetent to do the service that his soul requires. By his ingenuity he has made his body almost infinite to aid his soul in its efforts to grasp the infinite. The telescope and the spectroscope are extensions of his vision to the heavenly bodies. The telegraph and telephone are his contrivances for throwing his voice to

any distance on the planet and hearing words that are spoken round the world. Steam and electricity facilitate his mode of travel a thousandfold. The twelve-inch gun is the extension of his sword and his war club, and the printing-press is his means of making for himself an earthly immortality.

The limitations of the body and of life do not suit the soul of man. His restlessness under such limitations is suggestive of a nature that requires wider range and longer life than earth and life afford. It is true that no man ever compassed more than a small part of what may be known in this world, but this world is evidently for the early training of the soul. The world beyond is for its maturity. We are all children here. But even in the most illiterate man there is the beginning of the endless and the boundless. He may not write poetry, but he sees beauty in the

flower and sublimity in the skies. He may not be a musician, but his soul is a harp with a thousand strings. He may not be a philosopher, but in simple matters he can reason from cause to effect. He may not be a philanthropist, but he will share with his brother his last dime or give to the thirsty a cup of cold water. His nature is Divine and he has the capacity for immortality and aspires toward the infinite though he falters in his course.

The brevity of life and consequent limitations upon the achievements of man in this world are a blessing to the race. It is a universal truism that, "To him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not shall be taken even that which he hath." Brief as this life is, the power that the strong gains over the weak is thought to be a detriment to the majority of the race. But were the years of a lifetime lengthened

indefinitely, the evils of society would be multiplied many fold. The entire wealth of the world would fall into the hands of the few who are most successful in the art of money making. Those who are ambitious for power would be able to seize and wield the scepter of political and social authority for selfish ends. The genius would leave nothing for the amateur philosopher and poet and artist and scientist and inventor and engineer to attempt. To him that had most would most be given, and the less fortunate would lack as a consequence. Divine wisdom and love has therefore set bounds to earthly careers not by extinguishing man's passion for achievement, but by transferring him to other spheres for his activity and reserving this world for the development of the weak and for the encouragement of latent capacity for expansion toward the infinite.

Moral Reasonableness of God.

If the existence of God is necessary for a rational explanation of creation, no less is the spiritual and immortal nature of man required to explain God's moral reasonableness in creation.

If the soul is not spiritual and immortal, then matter is first and foremost in the mind of God and the earth was intended as much for brutes as for men, and there is as much virtue in the venom of reptiles as there is in the love and righteousness of the human heart.

In this world prosperity does not always attend a virtuous life. The stainless character does not always escape the slanderer's tongue. The truly great in moral integrity and unselfish endeavor are least understood and most lonely. Equality of opportunity and equity of reward are not looked for in this life at all times. The fragmentary development and the pitiable

condition of millions are most pathetic as all will acknowledge. Do not these facts point to an after life in which wrongs shall be righted, righteousness be vindicated, and virtue be given the seat of honor? The moral reasonableness in men leads to the conviction that the same attribute in their Heavenly Father is a guarantee of immortality.

But let us consider the significance of the stupendous universe in which we live. What is this vast system of worlds all for? Did God create it for His amusement and then to take delight in tearing it down again just as a child would build a cob house and exult in knocking it to pieces? What is its meaning and end if it is not intended to be a school and a home for the education and heritage of immortal spirits? We should not hesitate to call a man a fool who would build a mansion of imperishable material, equip it with all latest

improvements for the convenience and comfort and use of a large and intelligent family, fill it with the most elegant works of art and statuary and literature and furniture, set apart rooms for music and banqueting and household cheer and entertainment of royal guests, all to make it a fit dwelling place for a brood of bats. But no less unreasonable would the infinitely good and wise Father be if He has made this vast and beautiful world for beings whose short life allows them only to look upon it before they forever cease to be. Moreover, it is to man no more than a mockery if he is not immortal, because he longs for a future life and feels within him a capacity for it, and forever increasing delight in the knowledge of things of which this life has afforded him no more than the alphabet of his education.

That God should be so unreasonable is unthinkable. The universe was made for

a wise and good purpose. Since God did not need it for Himself, no higher purpose is conceivable than that it was made for beings whose capacities are commensurable with its vastness. And if truth and love and beauty and righteousness and God Himself are eternal, then the beings who have a capacity for them shall continue to live, at least as long as the capacity for such excellency remains in them. Man is, because the moral reasonableness of God called for his existence. He will therefore continue to live as long as infinite moral reasonableness calls for him or so long as he signifies anything for the good of the intelligent moral universe. A true faith, therefore, in God implies a faith in the soul's immortality. God is its final warrant and justification.

Immortality Brought to Light.

The truth of immortality, like all first truths, must be accepted on evidence. It

does not admit of scientific proof any more than does the fact of God. All knowledge begins with facts which do not admit of proof, but which must be accepted as true before any progress can be made. But while immortality can not be scientifically demonstrated, the absurdities that are implied in the denial of it are so preposterous that its acceptance as a fact is demanded by moral intelligence. But if we should appeal to revelation, the question of immortality is settled at once, for there it is brought to perfect light. Fundamental in all the writings of the Apostles and the words of our Lord is the truth of immortality.

The human race had followed the lamp of reason and walked in the light of the candle of the Lord that shines in the heart of every man. The world was conscious of an immortal day, but it groped in the twilight of that holy morning until there

came the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He came, saying, "I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die, for I give unto them eternal life." Christ spoke as one having a perfect knowledge of the future life and as having Himself the authority to give life eternal to all who by patient continuance in good works seek for glory, honor, and immortality. Jesus lived and taught as if He were as conscious of the spirit world as He was of the hills of Judea and the hamlets of Galilee. Immortality was one of the cardinal truths in all His teachings, and in His death and resurrection it was demonstrated as a certainty for all time. Passing into the spirit world He comforted His broken-hearted disciples with the assurance that where He was there they should be also. Thus,

immortality as a hope for every soul is made radiant by the teaching and triumph of the Son of God.

We are, then, not as the grass of the field or as the beast that perishes. We shall not return to the earth and be as the dead clod. We are beings immortal. We are the offspring of God, linked with the Eternal. Immortality is not a belief alone; it is a feeling. The more worthy we become, the more certain is our confidence and the higher our hopes. Those who live godly in Christ Jesus have even now the experience of immortality. So closely do they feel identified with Christ that if He lives they feel that they shall live also.

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